



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Wetlands Coordination Team

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PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT IN PURSUING NATIONAL
"NO NET LOSS" OF WETLANDS GOAL

The Domestic Policy Council's Wetlands Task Force today announced it would seek public comments on appropriate national policies for working toward the national goal of "no net loss" of wetlands. The Task Force announced that it would hold six regional public meetings this summer.

The public meetings will be held in Bismarck, North Dakota (August 17); Peoria, Illinois (August 20); New Orleans, Louisiana (August 27); Olympia, Washington (September 5); Anchorage, Alaska (September 7); and Providence, Rhode Island (September 17). The cities were selected to enable the Task Force to explore the widest possible range of regional wetland issues.

Wetlands are regarded as among the most productive wildlife habitats in the United States. They also help control erosion and flooding, abate water pollution, recharge groundwater, and serve as an ideal setting for many recreational activities. Today, less than half the wetlands present in the contiguous United States remain from colonial times.

President Bush has pledged that his Administration will work with state and local governments, the private sector, and individual citizens to help preserve wetlands. The President has also expressed his interest in seeking broad input into the

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wetland policy process, recognizing that the preservation of wetlands is an issue of broad concern, especially to conservation groups, private landowners, businesses, states, and municipalities. It is expected that the Task Force will receive comments on an array of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to working toward the national goal of "no net loss."

The public meetings will feature presentations by invited representatives of state and local governments and the private sector, and may include wetland user interests, conservation groups, and technical wetland experts. Also, each public meeting will include an open microphone session during which audience members may present their views. Each meeting will attempt to focus on regional as well as national wetland issues around the country. The Department of the Interior has been assigned primary responsibility for setting up the public meetings.

For those people who are unable to attend the meetings, the period for public comment on working toward the "no net loss" goal will be open until September 28. These comments will be summarized and provided to the Task Force for its consideration. Anyone wishing to provide recommendations to the Task Force is invited to do so by sending their comments to:

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